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| APPLICATION NO. | FILING DATE | FIRST NAMED INVENTOR | ATTORNEY DOCKET NO. | CONFIRMATION NO. |
|--|-------------|----------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| 10/684,406 | 10/15/2003 | Hamid R. Rabie | 4320-523 | 4409 |
| 1059 | 7590 | 06/17/2004 | | |
| BERESKIN AND PARR SCOTIA PLAZA 40 KING STREET WEST-SUITE 4000 BOX 401 TORONTO, ON M5H 3Y2 CANADA | | | EXAMINER [REDACTED] | BUSHEY, CHARLES S |
| | | | ART UNIT [REDACTED] | PAPER NUMBER 1724 |
| DATE MAILED: 06/17/2004 | | | | |

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

| | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|------------------|
| Office Action Summary | Application No. | Applicant(s) |
| | 10/684,406 | RABIE ET AL |
| | Examiner Scott Bushey | Art Unit 1724 |

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM
THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).

Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 23 April 2004.

2a) This action is **FINAL**. 2b) This action is non-final.

3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4) Claim(s) 1-9 is/are pending in the application.

4a) Of the above claim(s) 8 and 9 is/are withdrawn from consideration.

5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.

6) Claim(s) 1-7 is/are rejected.

7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.

8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10) The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).

11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).

a) All b) Some * c) None of:
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. 09/488,359.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
 2) Notice of Draftperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
 3) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
 Paper No(s)/Mail Date 2-23-04.

4) Interview Summary (PTO-413)
 Paper No(s)/Mail Date: _____.

5) Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
 6) Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

Election/Restrictions

1. Applicant's election without traverse of Group I, claims 1-7 in the paper submitted April 23, 2004 is acknowledged.
2. Applicant is reminded that upon the cancellation of claims to a non-elected invention, the inventorship must be amended in compliance with 37 CFR 1.48(b) if one or more of the currently named inventors is no longer an inventor of at least one claim remaining in the application. Any amendment of inventorship must be accompanied by a request under 37 CFR 1.48(b) and by the fee required under 37 CFR 1.17(i).

Specification

3. The disclosure is objected to because of the following informalities: On the first page of the specification, the first paragraph should be amended to update the status of parent application S.N. 10/369,699, which issued as patent 6,706,189 on March 16, 2004.

Appropriate correction is required.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

4. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

(e) the invention was described in a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention thereof by the applicant for patent, or on an international application by another who has fulfilled the requirements of paragraphs (1), (2), and (4) of section 371(c) of this title before the invention thereof by the applicant for patent.

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5. Claims 1, 2, and 6 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being clearly anticipated by the patent abstract of Japan 04265128 (The Figure and the Abstract).

Applicant should note that seepage of tank water into the aerator during the low pressure air portion of the cycle is considered inherent to the device due to the hydrostatic head of liquid above the aerators.

6. Claims 1-3, and 6 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being clearly anticipated by either Japan 7-185271 or Japan 8-323161.

Applicant should note that seepage of tank water into the aerator during the air off portion of the cycle is considered inherent to the device due to the hydrostatic head of liquid above the aerators.

7. Claims 1-3, 6, and 7 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being clearly anticipated by Pedersen et al '997 (Figs. 1, 2, 4, 5; col. 4, lines 56-62; col. 7, line 25 through col. 8, line 14; col. 11, lines 19-28).

Applicant should note that the reference clearly teaches flushing the aerators with bursts of air for 5 seconds alternating with air off conditions for 5 seconds, the cycle being repeated for 1 minute to clean the skein of hollow fiber membranes with air bubbles.

Applicant should note that seepage of tank water into the aerator during the air off portion of the cycle is considered inherent to the device due to the hydrostatic head of liquid above the aerators.

Although the instant application does not name an assignee, it is noted that Pedersen et al '997 and each of the parent patents to the instant application name Zenon Environmental Inc. as their common assignee. Even if the instant application is commonly assigned with Pedersen et al

‘997, based upon the earlier effective U.S. filing date of the reference, it constitutes prior art under 35 U.S.C. 102(e). This rejection under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) might be overcome either by a showing under 37 CFR 1.132 that any invention disclosed but not claimed in the reference was derived from the inventor of this application and is thus not the invention “by another,” or by an appropriate showing under 37 CFR 1.131.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

8. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

9. This application currently names joint inventors. In considering patentability of the claims under 35 U.S.C. 103(a), the examiner presumes that the subject matter of the various claims was commonly owned at the time any inventions covered therein were made absent any evidence to the contrary. Applicant is advised of the obligation under 37 CFR 1.56 to point out the inventor and invention dates of each claim that was not commonly owned at the time a later invention was made in order for the examiner to consider the applicability of 35 U.S.C. 103(c) and potential 35 U.S.C. 102(e), (f) or (g) prior art under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

10. Claims 4 and 5 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over any one of Japan 7-185271, Japan 8-323161, or Pedersen et al ‘997, taken in view of either of Japan 58-141796 or Japan 64-36099.

Each of the alternative primary references substantially disclose applicant's invention as recited by instant claims 4 and 5, except for the aerator being vented to atmosphere via a valve in communication with the aerator.

Japan 58-141796 (Figs. 1-4) and Japan 64-36099 (Figs. 1 and 2) each alternatively disclose aerator line flushing means wherein liquid, which has entered the aerator during an air off situation is flushed from the aerator line via a pipe having a valve, which allows the aerator to be vented to atmosphere. It would have been obvious to an artisan at the time of the invention, to modify the aerator air line construction of any one of the alternative primary references, to include a pipe extension with a valve, in view of either of the alternative secondary references, whereby the aerator may be connected to atmosphere to conveniently flush the aerator.

Conclusion

11. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

12. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Scott Bushey whose telephone number is (571) 272-1153. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Thursday 6:30AM-5:00PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Blaine R. Copenheaver can be reached on (571) 272-1156. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

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Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

Scott Bushey
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 1724

csb
6-14-04


6-14-04